



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9193
Bob Beeckman - FBI (313) 965-2323

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EVENT: Guilty Verdict

Defendant: Alonzo Bates

**FORMER DETROIT CITY COUNCILMAN FOUND
GUILTY OF THEFT AND FRAUD**

Former Detroit City Councilman Alonzo Bates, 65, of Detroit, was convicted today by a federal jury on four felony counts of theft from the City of Detroit and one count of bank fraud, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent In Charge of the Detroit Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Maurice Aouate, Special Agent In Charge of the Detroit Field Office of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations Division.

The jury deliberated approximately two days before returning the verdict, concluding a six day trial before United States District Judge Victoria Roberts.

The evidence presented at trial established that between 2002 and 2004 Bates placed ghost employees on the City's payroll. The ghost employees included Britni Barber, the

daughter of Bates' girlfriend; Melvin Cartwright, the defendant's brother-in-law; and Verenda Arnold, the mother of one of defendant's children. Bates also placed Jollan Johnson on the City's payroll who cut his lawn and did odd jobs at his home and rental property. The theft involved over \$91,000 in unearned wages.

Bates was further found guilty of bank fraud based on the fact that, after Jollan Johnson left Michigan for Alabama in February of 2004, the defendant cashed ten additional payroll checks in the name of Jollan Johnson by forging or causing others to forge Johnson's signature without Johnson's knowledge or consent.

Bates pleaded guilty on the eve of trial to charges that he failed to file federal tax returns for tax years 2001 through 2004, as he was required to do under federal law.

"During my term, one of this office's top priorities has been to fight corruption among public officials. Today's verdict evidences our success in carrying out successful prosecutions that support this priority. Public officials who use taxpayer funds for their own personal benefit or gain will be prosecuted by my office to the fullest extent of the law. I congratulate Assistant United States Attorney Michael Bullotta, the FBI, the IRS, and their entire trial team for a job very well done", stated United States Attorney Murphy.

"Public corruption continues to remain a problem and the FBI is committed to aggressively investigating these cases", said FBI Special Agent in Charge Daniel D. Roberts. "As reflected by today's verdict, the FBI will investigate public officials who abuse their elected office for personal gain and this will continue to remain one of the highest priorities of the FBI."

Maurice Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation said, "Public officials must comply with the same tax obligations as the citizens they were elected to serve. No one is above the law."

Each theft count carries a statutory maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. The bank fraud count carries a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine, and each tax charge carries a penalty of one year in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

The investigation leading up to the indictment was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations Division and the Detroit Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney R. Michael Bullotta.